Raisani slams 'criminal' silence on mines act

Says not a single political party responded to his warning letters; pleads to court for a fresh review of the law

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Former senator Lashkari Raisani on Sunday expressed disappointment over the unresponsiveness of political leaders to whom he had written regarding the re-approval of the Balochistan Mines and Minerals Act, 2025, terming their silence on the matter "criminal".

Talking to journalists at his Srawan House, Mr Raisani said, "Letters were sent to all heads of opposition and other parties sitting in the assemblies and outside, pointing out the efforts were underway to re-approve the controversial Mines and Mineral Act 2025, but not a single leader or party has responded so far."

Mr Raisani, who previously served as the provincial minister for mineral resources, said he has also taken legal action, approaching a court to request a new review of the law to ensure public control over the province's natural resources.

He said his letters urged political leaders to "play their role in safeguarding the precious minerals of Balochistan for the next generation and foil any efforts" to loot them.

He argued that Balochistan's immense natural wealth has historically been exploited. After natural gas was discovered in Sui in 1954, it strengthened Pakistan's economy and transformed it into an "Asian tiger," he said.

Mr Raisani lamented that instead of benefiting the local population, the province's resources were looted by successive federal governments, leaving 80 per cent of its people below the poverty line, according to a United Nations subsidiary report.

"We, through political movements and parties, are working to raise awareness among the people to stop the plunder of our resources," he said.

The veteran politician noted that previous public pressure from All Parties Conferences and the provincial opposition had compelled the government to withdraw the legislation through a joint resolution.

He said Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti later announced in the media that the law would be withdrawn via an executive order and reintroduced in parliament only after consultations to address its shortcomings.

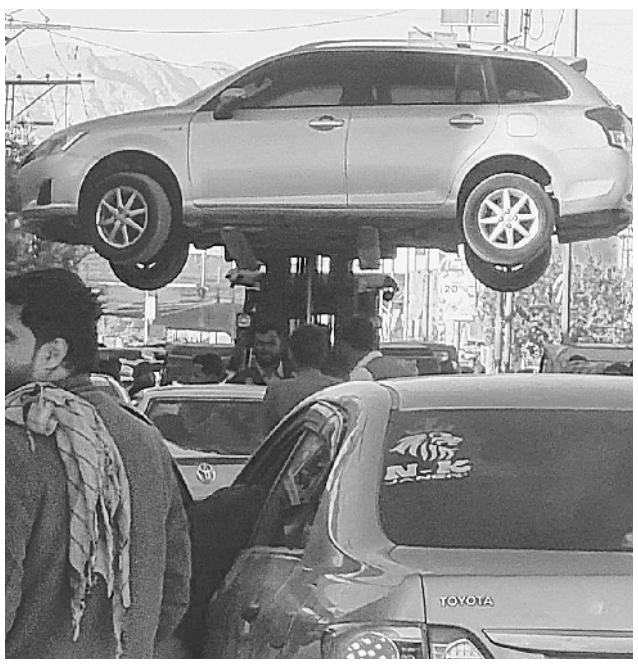
"However, no copy of that executive order has been provided to any political party so far, and we have again approached the court to obtain it," Mr Raisani said, adding that the continued silence from opposition parties remains deeply concerning.

He stressed that parliamentarians now have a responsibility to correct past legislative errors and draft future laws that protect Balochistan's interests.

Mr Raisani stated that while other provinces' chief ministers worked to secure their water and finances, Balochistan is only subjected to exploitation.

He warned that inaction by political leaders will lead to future generations' disapproval. He emphasised that elected officials should prioritise citizens' rights over anything.

"Our mission is to create public awareness and build political consciousness so that no one can again use legislation as a tool to loot Balochistan's wealth," Mr Raisani said.



QUETTA: Authorities remove a vehicle from a no-parking area, using a forklift for obstructing the flow of traffic.—PPI

Full immunisation coverage in Balochistan rises to 47pc: Bugti

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has said full immunisation coverage in the province, which had remained stagnant for five years, has risen from 38 per cent to 47pc within a year.

Speaking here on Saturday, CM Bugti noted that "significant improvement" in the province's public health sector is the result of effective reforms introduced by his government.

The chief minister said there has been a remarkable rise in the rate of child immunisation in Balochistan.

He added that this progress has been confirmed by third-party verification from the Immunisation Coverage Survey and a report from Aga Khan University, which stated that 70pc of the target under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) has been achieved.

CM Bugti said that transparent policies and improved governance by the provincial government have strengthened public confidence.

"This achievement in the health sector is a guarantee of a better and safer future for the people of Balochistan," the CM emphasised.

DHAKA: Naval chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf pays his respects at the Shikha Anirban, or martyrs' monument. The chief of naval staff is in Bangladesh on a four-day visit, and met with army chief Gen Wakeruz Zaman on Sunday. The two men discussed strengthening defence cooperation between the two countries and prospects of expanding military cooperation.—X / BangladeshNavyX

KP CM booked over 'anti-state' video

RAWALPINDI: The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has registered a case against KP CM Sohail Afridi and others on charges of making misleading statements against state institutions.

The FIR states that in an inquiry conducted by the NCCIA on Nov 8, it was revealed that the accused, Muhammad Sohail s/o Muhammad Sattar, resident of Shalobbar Bara Khyber, along with others, knowingly and deliberately, with mala fide intentions and ulterior motives, made false, misleading, derogatory, and intimidating statements against state institutions.

These statements were recorded, disseminated, and propagated through the YouTube channel PTI Official KPK. The video is titled 'Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi Media Talk outside Adiala Jail.'

Mr Afridi has directly been named in the case as the person who uploaded the statement on social media. A case was registered against him and others under sections 11, 20 and 26-A of Peca. It further states: "The role of others, if any, will be investigated during the course of inquiry."

The FIR states: "The accused and others' statements on social media constitute an organised attempt to undermine public trust in state institutions and are intended to foment unrest in the country and destabilise national security."

According to the FIR, the KP CM was also found to be involved in preparing, publishing, sharing and circulating fake and misleading content on social media to incite violence, create racial hatred, panic, and fear, cause disorder and unrest among the public, and promote anti-state sentiments.—Mohammad Asghar

Turkiye sending 'big guns'

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developments and the results of talks between his country and Afghanistan, emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region, according to *IRNA*. The two sides also agreed to continue consultations on this matter.

During Mr Araghchi's talks with the Afghan foreign minister, Mr Muttaqi thanked Iran for its goodwill and provided an update on the current situation, as well as the outcomes of recent talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also reiterated Afghanistan's commitment to upholding the ceasefire and resolving issues through diplomacy and dialogue, *IRNA* reported.

FO slams Afghan Taliban

The Foreign Office (FO) on Sunday said the Afghan Taliban participated in talks with Pakistan this past week only to prolong a temporary ceasefire and did not take action against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil, *Dawn.com* reported.

"Anyone following the talks mediated by Turkiye and Qatar could see that the Taliban regime was only interested in extending the temporary ceasefire without taking concrete or verifiable steps against TTP/FaK [Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan/Fitna-al-Khawarij] and BLA/FaH [Balochistan Liberation Army/Fitna-al-Hindustan] elements in Afghanistan," a statement issued by the FO read.

It added that the Afghan regime used the talks to malign Pakistan through hypothetical accusations and rhetoric, engaging in lengthy discussions without reaching any understanding. The Taliban also attempted to frame Pakistani terrorists hiding in Afghanistan as a "humanitarian issue".

The FO highlighted that after Operation Zarb-i-Azb in 2015, terrorists fled to Afghanistan, assisted the Taliban against coalition forces, and the Afghan government, and were now harboured as a reward for their allegiance. It added that despite the breakdown of negotiations, Pakistan had never refused dialogue with "any government in Kabul", but would not engage with terrorist groups.

The statement read that Pakistan had hoped the Taliban regime would control these attacks and take concrete action, while Islamabad extended humanitarian assistance, encouraged trade, and facilitated educational and medical visas.

However, the Taliban's response has been "hollow promises and inaction," the FO said.

The statement reiterated that the Afghan Taliban hand over these terrorists, adding that Kabul repeatedly refused to do so, citing a lack of control. Moreover, the FO noted in its statement an attempt by elements in the Afghan Taliban to "instigate Pashtoon (Pakhtun) nationalism" in Pakistan.

"It is a historical fact that Pashtoons in Pakistan are a vibrant part of the society and the state, holding leadership positions across the spectrum of polity and bureaucracy," the statement read.

PIA claims no flight delays due to strike

RAWALPINDI: Flights cancellations that occurred over the weekend were due to "schedule rationalisation, weather conditions, or other operational reasons", PIA said on Sunday, refuting claims that a strike by engineering staff was hampering its operations.

In a statement, a PIA spokesperson also disputed claims about aircraft safety put forward by the Society of Aircraft Engineers of Pakistan (SAEP), which had maintained that its personnel could not compromise on safety and airworthiness.

"The body responsible for air safety in Pakistan is the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA), which regulates all airlines, including PIA, under the strictest international standards and procedures. All matters concerning the use and replacement of parts, the fitness of aircraft for flight, and the routes, schedules, or changes thereto are under the direct purview of the PCAA and are executed only after seeking their approvals," the spokesperson said.

Referring to images of damage to an aircraft windscreen that circulated on the media, the spokesperson said that the use of steel tape for curing (drying) sealant after windscreen repair was a routine matter. But, he maintained, an impression was wrongly created that "flights were being operated with a windscreen held together by tape".

The spokesperson also claimed that the PIA management had not taken administrative or retaliatory action against any engineer, adding that the dismissal of the body's "self-styled" president and general secretary was the result of administrative proceedings ongoing for the past four months.

However, the dismissal letter issued to both men last week stated they had been issued notices for conducting a press conference without prior authorisation and for disclosing official information to the media. The two men were subsequently fired after they failed to appear before an enquiry committee.—Staff Reporter

Ruling allies green-light 27th Amendment draft

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to decide on his party's suggestion for changing the name of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told reporters it was decided that provinces be taken into confidence on changing the province's name. MQM-P's suggestion regarding local governments was also discussed, he said, adding that it was decided that provinces be taken into confidence on changing the province's name. Mr Tarar further said that the report of the committees would be tabled before the Senate on Monday (today).

Opposition boycott

The standing committees met on Sunday to discuss the proposed bill for the 27th Constitutional Amendment a day after it was tabled in the Senate. This bill was approved by the federal cabinet on Saturday hours before it was presented in the upper house of parliament. As Senator Farooq H. Naek chaired the meeting, the PTI, the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) and the Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM) continued their boycott of the parliamentary committee.

Referring to the JUI-F's absence, the law minister had stated its members had informed the committee on Saturday about their party's policy. He emphasised that parliamentary parties should utilise their right to vote, rather than boycotting the process altogether.

The opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz-i-Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP), which includes the PTI, announced a nationwide protest movement against the 27th Amendment, urging the people to take a stand against the "extremely dark and dangerous" change in the Constitution.

Separately, PPP's MNA Kasim Gilani, in a tweet summarised, that the 27th Constitutional Amendment "mainly touches 5 key areas: establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court, transfer of judges (Article 200), fixing the KP Senate election anomaly, [two per cent] cabinet size increase on smaller provinces' demand (Article 130(6)), [and] amendments in Article 243 on defence services & presidential immunity".

Cabinet ministers rush to seek NP support

QUETTA: PM's aide on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah and other members of the federal cabinet rushed to Turbat late on Sunday evening to meet with National Party chief Dr Abdul Malik Baloch.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti also accompanied the federal government's delegates, who ostensibly sought to secure the party's support for the 27th Amendment, which is currently being piloted through parliament.

The visit came mere hours after the party issued a statement rejecting the government's move to table 27th Constitutional Amendment in Senate.

In the meeting, which continued for around an hour, the two sides discussed the overall political situation. Sources privy to the meeting claimed the ministers had sought National Party's support for the amendment.

The government delegation also conveyed a message from PM Shehbaz Sharif.

Earlier, in a statement issued on Sunday, NP's central spokesperson said that since the amendment was made public, the party had held detailed consultations with its legal experts and deliberated on the matter at relevant forums.

The party, which has representation in the National Assembly, Senate and Balochistan Assembly, insisted that the proposed amendment was tantamount to weakening the spirit and structure of the Constitution.

Therefore, the party's constitutional bodies had, by a majority decision, decided to oppose the legislation, the spokesperson said.

"The National Party will oppose the constitutional amendment," he said.—Saleem Shahid and Muhammad Akbar Notezai

Minister for promoting sports among youth

QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Education Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani said that promoting sports was one of the top priorities of the government to promote healthy activities among the youths of Balochistan.

"I want extracurricular activities—especially sports—to be made an essential part of the curriculum in educational institutions," she said at a hockey prize ceremony on Sunday.

She added that in line with the vision of the Balochistan chief minister, efforts were underway to extend sports facilities and activities to the remote parts of the province. She said her focus remained on introducing more sports disciplines in schools to nurture young talent.

Expressing pride in hockey as Pakistan's national sport, she mentioned that she also had the honour of playing hockey in the past. The education minister appreciated the provincial administration of the hockey federation and school management for successfully organising the tournament and assured that their sports-related demands would be given due consideration.—Staff Correspondent

Balochistan govt cancels Hub land allotment

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Amid reports of discrepancies, the Balochistan government has cancelled the allotment of about 400 acres in Mouza Berot of Hub, and declared it state land.

Officials said that the notification issued by the Board of Revenue about the allotment of this land has been withdrawn from the date of its issuance with immediate effect, and the land allocation to individuals near the recently constructed bypass stands withdrawn.

"The land allotted during 2023 to 2025 to private individuals will stand cancelled," sources said, adding that the relevant settlement officers have been directed to hand over all reports of the cancelled allotment to the Hub deputy commissioner.

The Balochistan government had taken notice of irregularities in the land allotment in Hub and ordered its cancellation. The documents revealed that the land in Mouza Berot was allotted to people who were not natives and wanted to capitalise on the increase in the land's value after the bypass construction.Around 400 to 500 acres of land were allotted to such people, said officials, adding that people did not initially show interest in this land under the Land Act 1967. However, after the bypass, its price increased to millions of rupees per acre, leading to its sale allegedly in connivance with local settlement officials. An investigation was also started into this practice.

Pakistan, S. Arabia ink Haj deal, vow to boost defence ties

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Pakistan aims to replicate and enhance the successful arrangements from the previous Hajj season.

CJCSC meets Saudi army chief

Separately, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, met Gen Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff of the Saudi Armed Forces, during an official visit to the kingdom.

The two sides discussed the evolving global and regional environment and avenues for enhancing bilateral defence cooperation, according to statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations on Sunday.

The military leadership reaffirmed their resolve to further deepen the strong brotherly ties and enduring defence partnership between the two countries.

In recognition of his significant contributions to military-to-military ties, Gen Mirza was conferred with the King Abdulaziz Medal of Honour of the Excellent Class.

The Saudi military leadership lauded the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

PM shoots down immunity clause, hails allies' support for legislation

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his role as the prime minister.

"The other positions being granted immunity do not have any executive functions," Mr Tarrar explained.

It may be recalled that government senators Anusha Rahman and Khalil Tahir Sandhu tabled a proposal to extend the immunity currently enjoyed by the president under Article 248 of the Constitution to include the prime minister. The clause sought to extend presidential immunity to the prime minister, effectively barring criminal proceedings against the premier during the term in office.

PM hosts dinner

Later, PM Shehbaz hosted a dinner for senators at the PM House and congratulated them on the approval of the 27th Amendment bill by the joint parliamentary committee. "We have all struggled jointly for strengthening of the democracy, broader national interest, consensus among provinces, and improving governance," he added.

The PM said whatever the government has achieved; it was because of the support of the allied parties.

"Pakistan's success on diplomatic front is a reflection of coordination and harmony among the ruling coalition," he said. The PM said the country was progressing economic and due to economic stability, the country was heading in the right direction.